

AMD17-146 4/15/08

**Bell, Leanne S (DOT)**

**From:** Jim Dinley [jimdinley@cityofsitka.com]  
**To:** Tuesday, April 15, 2008 10:46 AM  
**Cc:** Menzies, Malcolm A (DOT)  
**Subject:** Hughes, Andrew N (DOT); DOT STIP  
Public Review of Draft 06 09 STIP Amendment 17 (Your 12 Mar 08 Ltr)

**To:** DOT & PF Southeast Region  
**From:** Jim Dinley, Municipal Administrator  
**CC:** Mayor Dapcevich and Assembly Members  
**Date:** 11 Apr 2008  
**Re:** Public Review of Draft 06 09 STIP Amendment 17 (Your 12 Mar 08 Ltr)

Mr. Menzies,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft STIP. Below are Sitka's comments for your consideration. Please pass on our thanks to Mr. Ron King for his time-sensitive work on getting the Federal Transit Authority project in this STIP so we could apply for earmarked grants this FY.

Mr. POC is Mr. Joe Castro, Public Works Director, at 747-1804 or [castroj@cityofsitka.com](mailto:castroj@cityofsitka.com).

Best Regards,

Jim Dinley  
Municipal Administrator  
City and Borough of Sitka

Comments:

**1) page 37 – CTP Reconstruction** – What is this project? What budget?

**2) page 39 – Airport Access Improvements** – Need to verify construction in Summer 2008 due to BLM land transfer issues or will funds have to be moved to FY09?

**3) page 40 – Sawmill Creek Road Upgrade – Stage 3**

As DOT knows, the community of Sitka, the CBS Assembly and staff have had the road upgrade with a separated bike path as a high priority since the early 1990's. Phases I and II of the SMC upgrade are tremendous improvements and have stimulated an even higher level of non-motorized use along the roadway.

Phase III is also extremely important since it functions as a major leg of the 2003 Sitka Trail Plan Sawmill Cove Loop Trail System which is nearing completion. Key to the functionality of the loop system is the provision of adequate pedestrian facilities in Phase III.

The current design alternative which allows only for 4' commuter bike paths on the roadway shoulder is inadequate since a pedestrian walkway isn't included. Considering the rising daily vehicle count and increase in semi truck traffic, and winding, curvy roadway, this design is marginally suitable for bicycles but clearly is not safe for walkers. A much wider, 6' bike path on Halibut Point Road's shoulder has been a failure since pedestrians simply don't feel safe walking on a road shoulder when large trucks are present. Consequently few pedestrians use Halibut Point Road.

In 2007, DOT prepared a report which examined bicycle and pedestrian accommodation for Phase III. The base alternative in this report only allows for 4' wide commuter bike paths on the road shoulders. Cost estimates for the six or 10' separated path options ranged from 1.07 to 9.19 million. An alternative proposal, not considered in this report, developed by City staff and community members, would require eight feet less roadway width than additive alternate 6 which has the lowest cost associated with it, 1.07 million.

Installing a full 10' wide separated multi-use path on Phase III, as proposed in the DOT report, is very expensive due to terrain difficulties in a few locations. An affordable design compromise is to combine the proposed action, Design Base Alternative 1, with a 6' asphalt sidewalk on the ocean side of the road, outside of the guardrail. In this way, the guardrail would provide a physical separation while requiring little additional space. The sidewalk would be signed for pedestrians only and bicycles would use the road shoulder "bike lane". Parts of Sawmill Creek Phase 2 was constructed in this way and has been working extremely well.

The '09 design money is only for the base bid. Additional design funds may be needed to further examine and complete this more affordable design that will also meet community goals. The proposed compromise design will reduce construction costs estimates over earlier estimates generated for the 10' separated pathway. Minor adjustments to the centerline that was established in the earlier design will need to be considered to reduce the final project costs for fill or fencing. In some locations the sidewalk could be lower in elevation than the road, saving embankment cost. In a few locations, the road can be routed into the slope without requiring undue excavation to avoid fills on the road's oceanside.

Recently, support for this compromise layout has been voiced by Sitka Trail Works' Board of Directors and then the Sitka Parks and Recreation Committee unanimously voted on 4/3/08, to support the new design concept offered to DOT by the City. These members, who represent Sitka's recreational community, urge DOT to design the project to include the 6' pedestrian sidewalk since this represents a reasonable, cost effective, safe approach to meeting the public's future non-motorized facility needs along Sawmill Creek Road.

Thank you for considering our comments. We look forward to working closely with DOT as this project moves ahead.

**4) page 38 – Japonski Island Road** – this page was printed after page 40

**page 48 – Sawmill Creek Intermodal Facility** – correct page numbering.

Many thanks to Mr. Ron King, Chief of Surface Transportation Programs, for his tremendous assistance in getting this federal earmark in the STIP so Sitka can proceed with the FTA grant application this year.

**6) Overall** – Thanks for your support and we urge you to continue to work to upgrade Sitka's state roads, including Halibut Point Road, with enhancements for bicycle and pedestrian traffic.